(b) how far these have been achieved;

(c) the strategy adopted by the Government to increase export of agricultural produce; and

(d) how far this strategy has been successful in increasing agro-exports?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Performance of the previous year serves as a benchmark target for export agricultural products. Since international trade in agricultural commodities is dependent on domestic supply matched with international demand world prices, prevailing consumer preferences and quality concerned, targets set are essentially an indication of intent.

(c) Policy of exports of agricultural products forms an integral part of the Export Import Policy of the country. The policy regarding exports of agricultural products is governed principally by the concerns of India's food security, maximizing farm incomes and earning foreign exchange. Review of export performance of agricultural products is an on-going process, and accordingly, policy interventions are made, as and when considered necessary, with a view to making agricultural exports increasingly viable.

(d) Agro exports including tea, coffee and marine products during the year 1997-98 were at Rs. 24626.16 crores and during the year 1998-99, were at Rs. 25224.63 crores.

Export growth

14. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the targets set for the growth of exports during 1997-98 and 1998-99;

(b) how far these have been achieved;

(c) what had been the growth in exports during the first half of 1999-2000; and

(d) the details of measures taken to accelerate the growth of exports?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) The export growth rate targets and export performance during 1997-98 and 1998-99 are as under:

Year	Export Targets (%)	Export Performance (%)
1997-98	18	4.6
1998-99	20	3.7*

* Provisional

(c) According to the provisional data from Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics (DGCI&S), the export growth rate during the first half i.e. April—September, 1999-2000 is 7.39% (in dollar terms)

(d) a number of steps have been taken to promote exports which include reduction in transaction cost through decentralisation an implificaion of procedures and various other measures as enumerated in the Exim Policy. Steps have also been taken to promote exports through multilateral and bilateral initiatives, identification of thrust sectors and focus regions.

New Exim Policy

15. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have introduced a new Exim Policy;

(b) if so, the details of the new Exim policy and how far it would help to improve the export and import of the country;

(c) which country is the highest importer of our goods;

(d) the steps taken to improve our exports to other countries?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Government had notified certain amendments to the Exim Policy, 1997—2002 (incorporating amendments made upto 31st March, 1999) on 31.3.99.

(b) and (d) The details are contained in the revised document, copies of which are available in the Parliament Library. The objectives of the EXIM Policy are as under:—

(i) To accelerate the country's transition to a globally oriented vibrant economy with a view to derive maximum benefits from expanding global market opportunities.